

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is requested.

Claims 1-20 remain in the application. All of the claims have been amended to eliminate the numeric references. Numeric references are not required under U.S. patent law and are given no patentable weight. Accordingly, the amendments to eliminate the numeric references are not narrowing amendments and are not amendments entered for purposes of patentability. Claim 1 also has been amended to define the elected embodiment more clearly. Claims 2 and 4 have been amended to conform to amended claim 1. Claims 6 and 7 have been amended into independent form.

The Examiner objected to original claims 4 and 7 in view of informalities that were noted in the Office Action.

Claims 4 and 7 were amended to address the informalities in accordance with the helpful advice of the Examiner.

Claims 1, 2, 7, 11 and 14 were rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Ota et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,670,555. Claim 6 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious over Ota et al. in view of Yamamoto. The Examiner will note that the Ota et al. reference issued on December 30, 2003 based on an application that was filed on January 24, 2003. The Ota et al. reference is assigned to the assignee of the subject invention and to two other related companies. The above-captioned application claims priority on two Japanese applications filed respectively on August 22, 2002 and October 21, 2002, and hence several months before the U.S. filing date of Ota et al.

This amendment is submitted with sworn translations of the two priority documents. Certified copies of the priority documents have been submitted already. Accordingly, it is submitted that Ota et al. should be removed as a reference.

Claim 6 had dependent directly from claim 1. Claim 6 has been amended into independent form with all of the limitations of claim 1. It is believed that the removal of Ota et al. as a reference places amended independent claim 6 in condition for allowance.

Claim 7 also had depended directly from claim 1. Claim 7 has been amended into independent form with all the limitations of claim 1. The removal of Ota et al. as a reference is believed to place amended independent claim 7 in condition for allowance. Claims 8-15 all dependent directly or indirectly from amended claim 7. Hence, claims 8-15 also are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Inoue. Inoue is assigned to a predecessor to the assignee of the subject application.

The Examiner correctly notes that Inoue shows a terminal with a main body 3, a coupling 5 and a wire connecting portion 6. The Examiner refers to the element 8 of Inoue as being a reinforcing plate. In fact, the element 8 of Inoue is a resilient arm that necessarily must be spaced from the coupling portion 5 so that the tab 4 of another such terminal can be slid beneath the resilient arm to hold two such terminals together and in fixed rotational relationship to one another.

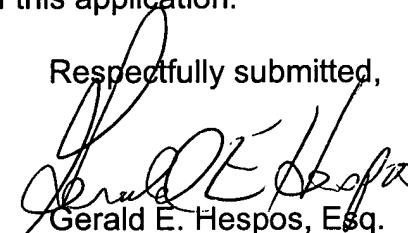
Claim 1 has been amended to define the reinforcing means as being "formed by folding at least one reinforcing plate from the main body into contact with the coupling and at least one fastener folded from the coupling into engagement with a

surface of the reinforcing plate facing away from the coupling. Inoue has no suggestion at all of the features of the invention defined by amended claim 1. Accordingly, amended claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-5 are believed to be patentable over Inoue.

The applicants and the assignee are pleased to note that claims 16-20 were allowed as filed. Claims 16-20 remain in the application and have been amended merely to eliminate the reference numerals. Accordingly, amended claims 16-20 are believed to be in condition for allowance.

In view of the preceding amendments and remarks, it is submitted that all of the claims remaining in the application are directed to patentable subject matter and allowance is solicited. The Examiner is urged to contact applicant's attorney at the number below to expedite the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,


Gerald E. Hespos, Esq.
Atty. Reg. No. 30,066
Customer No. 001218
CASELLA & HESPOS LLP
274 Madison Avenue - Suite 1703
New York, NY 10016
Tel. (212) 725-2450
Fax (212) 725-2452

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